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FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4683
INFO RUCNSOM/SOMALIA COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RHMFIISS/CJTF HOA
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RHMFIISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 NAIROBI 000473

SIPDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (UPDATED CLASSIFICATION)

SIPDIS

FOR M, ACTING A/S STARR, AND A/S FRAZER FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/12/2018
TAGS: OTRA PREL ASEC PTER MOPS ET SO
SUBJECT: Somalia -- Travel Request

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Classified by PolOff Mitchell P. Benedict for reasons 1.4 (b,d)

¶1. (U) This is an action message. See paras 2 and 10.

¶2. (C) Embassy Nairobi requests Department approval for Bradley G. Anderson, Colonel, Defense Attaché, U.S. Defense Attaché Office Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and Lisa R. Schade, Lieutenant Colonel, Marine Corps Attaché, U.S. Defense Attaché Office Nairobi, Kenya to visit Mogadishu, Somalia from February 17-19. COL Anderson and LtCol Schade will be traveling with the Addis Ababa-based UK and French DATTs and Ethiopian General Hassen to visit Mogadishu-based Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) units, call on Somali political leaders, visit the Port, and visit Ugandan and Burundian military elements serving under the African Union Peace Support Mission (AMISOM) in Mogadishu.

¶3. (C) Ambassadors Ranneberger and Yamamoto strongly support this proposed travel.

Travel Details

¶4. (S/NF) COL Anderson and LtCol Schade will depart from Nairobi for Mogadishu along with the delegation on February 17 on an Ethiopian chartered flight. The delegation will arrive mid-day at Mogadishu's International Airport. The delegation will be met planeside by AMISOM/Ugandan security forces with wheeled armored vehicles and armed escort. On arrival the delegation will travel to the AMISOM/Ugandan headquarters located at the airport for meetings with AMISOM/Ugandan and Burundian staff. Overnight accommodation will be provided by Ugandan forces at the airport. The delegation will rest overnight at the airport in accommodation provided by Ugandan forces.

¶5. (S/NF) On February 18 the delegation will travel with wheeled armored vehicles and armed escort to the Villa Somalia (presidential offices) for meetings with Transitional Federal Government (TFG) staff and AMISOM security personnel located there. Next the delegation will travel with wheeled armored vehicles and armed escort to the Mogadishu port for meetings with TFG staff and AMISOM security personnel located there. The delegation will also travel with wheeled armored vehicles and armed escort to visit the Burundian AMISOM/HQs for a review of the situation. The delegation will rest overnight at the airport in accommodation provided by Ugandan forces.

¶6. (S/NF) On February 19 the delegation will travel with wheeled armored vehicles and armed escort to ENDF headquarters for meetings with Ethiopian military staff and security personnel. Afterward the delegation will return to the airport and depart mid-day by Ethiopian

chartered flight to Nairobi. COL Anderson and LtCol Schade will debrief Embassy Nairobi on their travel to Mogadishu. COL Anderson will rest overnight in Nairobi on February 19 and depart Nairobi for Addis Ababa on February 20.

Threat Assessment

17. (S//NF) Embassy Nairobi RSO: Numerous credible intelligence reports clearly indicate that the East Africa al-Qa'ida and affiliated Somali extremists remain operationally active in Mogadishu. These elements have frequently used suicide bombings, well planned ambushes and roadside improvised explosive devices in attacks against ENDF, AMISOM forces and TFG leaders. Members of the Jihadi militant group, al-Shabaab, are actively engaged in conducting myriad attacks inside Mogadishu, to include targeted assassinations of high profile individuals. The Addis Ababa DATT and Nairobi Marine Corps Attache would present extremely High Value Targets for the East Africa al-Qa'ida and affiliated Somali extremists. Given the opportunity, these entities would expend considerable effort and resources to conduct attacks against any visiting USG personnel despite the promise of protection by the ENDF.

18. (S//NF) The Somali TFG, the African Union Mission in Somalia, and the ENDF cannot be expected to provide sufficient protection and appropriate security for this visit as evidenced by the constant attacks they themselves endure in Mogadishu, which are unpredictable, uncounterable and continue unabated. Furthermore, any aircraft arriving and departing from Mogadishu is vulnerable to attack by MANPADS, and/or mortars when landing and taking off as has happened in the past, and there is no viable method of deterring these types of threats. Based upon all currently available information from relevant security and intelligence sources, both within and outside of the U.S. Mission and USG, RSO is of the opinion that the dangerous, volatile and uncertain security situation in Mogadishu does not support the visit of the DATT at this time.

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Security Plan

19. (S//NF) The Ugandan military component of AMISOM is responsible for all security measures and escorts, including emergency contingencies and evacuation plans. All movement outside the military encampment at the airport will be in armored personnel carriers. COL Anderson and LtCol Schade will not/not have weapons but will be wearing body armor and steel pot (all kevlar). The delegation will confine itself to those areas controlled by security forces and take well protected routes from the airport to meeting venues.

Action Request

110. (C) Action Request: Embassy Nairobi requests M approval of this proposed travel to Somalia as soon as possible. Once approved, the final travel itinerary will be forwarded to AF and DS.

RANNEBERGER